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CONTRACTING ORGANIZATION: Darton College̊ÃՇàæ}ˆ̊ÕŒÁ̊FÏ€Ï

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14. ABSTRACT
Darton State College's Customized Nursing Programs for the Fort Benning Community are created specifically for active duty military, their dependents, and employees of Fort Benning. The Customized Nursing Program consists of two different tracks that are designed with two distinctively different types of students in mind. There is the traditional hybrid nursing program for students who have no formal healthcare background, and there is the Accelerated Bridge program for LPNs, Paramedics and Army Medic 68W M6 with medical training. The Customized Nursing Programs allows students to take face-to-face and online courses that are all instructor led, highly interactive, and utilize the latest multimedia technologies. The Customized Nursing Programs for the Fort Benning Community are flexible, with clinical rotations and lab experiences conducted on base or in the Columbus area at times that are convenient for the military community. The program design even includes an option for military personnel who may be deployed while pursuing their coursework.

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Introduction

Customized Nursing Programs for the Fort Benning Community project provides two different nursing programs for the Fort Benning Community: a traditional hybrid nursing program and an Accelerated Bridge program for ~~LPS~~ LPN, Paramedics and Army Medic 68W M6. Research includes qualitative and quantitative methods. The participants are limited to active duty military, their dependants and employees ~~for~~ of Fort Benning. The Cohorts, their classes and when they began are contained in the tables below ~~. They are~~ arranged by semester. The evaluations are used both formative and summative. The summative research is to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the programs as compared to companion semesters taught on the main campus at Darton State College. The first part of the report is organized around the statement of work items. Since this is serving as both the fourth quarter report and the annual report, there is a section at the end that contains additional information that is a part of the fourth quarter report. There are some attachments as well.

The statement of work items from the official proposal are in bold print before the response for that item.

• Courses for the first traditional cohort and the first Healthcare Professional Bridge programs will continue to be taught Summer 2011.

Funding for Year One was not received until September 14, 2011 so the timeline in the statement of work was adjusted; however, with previous funding, the courses for the first traditional cohort and the first Healthcare Professional Bridge program were taught in the Summer Semester 2011. The first bridge cohort graduated in December 2011. The second cohort of the Healthcare Professional Bridge program began in October 2011. The second cohort of the five semester traditional nursing program began in January 2012. All of these activities were accomplished as specified in the Statement of Work. Below is summary of courses for each cohort start date and course by semester.

First Quarter Cohorts and Courses:

Cohort	Start Date	Program	Courses Fall Semester 2011 (August 17 – December 13)
Bridge I (5th of 5 semesters)	October 2010	Healthcare Professional Bridge	Adult Health III NURS 2115
Traditional I (3rd of 5 semesters)	January 2011	Traditional Nursing Program	Adult Health II NURS 1112 Leadership NURS 2117
Bridge II	October 2011	Healthcare Professional Bridge	Fundamentals NURS 1301 Psych. Nursing NURS 2313

Second Quarter Cohorts and Courses:

Cohort	Start Date	Program	Courses Spring Semester 2012 (January 4 – May 3)
Traditional I (4th of 5 semesters)	January 2011	Traditional Nursing Program	Nursing Care/Women/Children NURS 2111 Psychiatric Nursing NURS 2113
Traditional II (1st Semester)	January 2012	Traditional Nursing Program	Fundamentals of Nursing NURS 1101 Pharmacology for Nurses NURS 1105
Bridge II (2nd of 4 semesters)	October 2011	Healthcare Professional Bridge	Adult Health II Bridge NURS 1311 Pharmacology for Nurses NURS 1105

Third Quarter Cohorts and Courses:

Cohort	Start Date	Program	Courses Summer Semester 2012 (May 22 – July 26)
Traditional I (5th of 5 semesters)	January 2011	Traditional Nursing Program	Adult Health III NURS 2115
Traditional II (2nd of 5 semesters)	January 2012	Traditional Nursing Program	Adult Health I NURS 1111
Bridge II (3rd of 4 semesters)	October 2011	Healthcare Professional Bridge	Nursing Care/Women/Children NURS 2311 Nursing Leadership NURS 2117

Fourth Quarter Cohorts and Courses

Cohort	Start Date	Program	Courses Fall Semester 2012 (August 15 – December 11)
Traditional I Graduated	January 2011	Traditional Nursing Program	Graduated at end of Summer Semester
Traditional II (3rd of 5 semesters)	January 2012	Traditional Nursing Program	Adult Health II NURS 1112 Psychiatric Nursing NURS 2113
Bridge II (4th of 4 semesters)	October 2011	Healthcare Professional Bridge	Adult Health III NURS 2115
Bridge III (1st of 4 semesters)	Began October 9, 2012	Healthcare Professional Bridge	Fundamentals NURS 1301 Psych. Nursing NURS 2313

• Interactive multimedia nursing courseware will be developed for the following courses: NURS 2117, NURS 2115, NURS 1112, and NURS 2111.

These were complete according to the schedule. However, adjustments had to be made for the conversion from WebCT to Desire2Learn for implementation for Spring 2013 semester. In conjunction with this, a new design was developed. The faculty and students like the new design. The new course shell, including a new look, was created for the nursing courses. It has additional functionality. It will display hand held devices, including smartphones and tablets, so that students can quickly check on their courses. We are assuming students would probably use these selectively, rather than do all their work on small devices. However, there are audio files of content that the students may wish to access on smart phones, MP3 devices, or other devices.

Modifications and improvements to courses, as described in the Statement of Work, are ongoing each semester. The results of focus group meetings, telephone interviews, and surveys are used to improve the courses as needed each semester.

• Mentoring resources will be completed for the courses above and for NURS 2311 and NURS 2113.

The mentoring resources for these courses are complete; however, if one of the mentoring faculty members find or design some additional resources, they are making them available on the Mentoring website.

• Netbook/laptop versions of Anatomy and Physiology I and II and Medical Terminology will be developed for deployed students with limited or no internet accessibility.

The Anatomy and Physiology I and II and the Medical Terminology course development for laptop and netbook platforms, as specified in the Statement of Work, were completed in September 2012. These courses were constructed for sporadic and limited internet access. The content was converted to be contained on the laptop or netbooks; when internet access is available, assessments are submitted. The faculty completed their portion of the work and design and the technology professionals are in the process of completing their work.

• Based on the evaluation of the first 20 hours of courses that were developed during the original funding, modifications and improvements will be made to these courses.

Interactive multimedia nursing courseware was developed for NURS 2117, NURS 2115, NURS 1112, and NURS 2111 as specified in the Statement of Work. The new course shell, including a new look, was created for the nursing courses. It has additional functionality. It will display hand held devices, including smartphones and tablets, so that students can quickly check on their courses. We are assuming students would probably use these selectively, rather than do all their work on small devices. However, there are audio files of content that the students may wish to access on smart phones, MP3 devices, or other devices.

Modifications and improvements to courses, as described in the Statement of Work, are ongoing each semester. The results of focus group meetings, telephone interviews, and surveys are used to improve the courses as needed each semester.

• The first cohort of the Healthcare Professional Bridge program graduated Fall 2011.

• The second cohort of the Healthcare Professional Bridge program began classes in October 2011.

• A second cohort of the five semester traditional nursing program began in January 2012.

All of this information for the above three bullets is in the tables under the first bullet of the statement of work. All cohorts began and classes were taught according to the original schedule.

- **Research: Summer 2011, Fall 2011, and Spring 2012**

Because of the start date difference, the research was conducted for Fall 2011, Spring 2012 and Summer 2012 .The results of this are included later in this document.

The first set of analyses will look at group comparisons between each of the Fort Benning programs and the respective comparison program. Independent t-tests and Levene's Test for Equality of Variances will be used to assess differences between the Fort Benning programs and the Darton College programs in terms of graduating GPA, as well as individual semester GPAs (Hypotheses I through IV). Beyond this, we will use chi-square tests to compare the Fort Benning graduates to the Darton College graduates in regard to passing the NCLEX exam (Hypotheses VIII and IX). In addition, retention rates, graduation rates and persistence rates of the Fort Benning cohorts will be compared using chi-square tests to the Darton College cohorts (Hypotheses X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, and XV). This is in a separate section included below.

• Surveys, evaluations, phone interviews, and focus groups will be used to provide formative feedback on courses, resources, mentoring, support services, and the overall program. The results will be analyzed, and recommendations implemented where possible.

> The qualitative evaluations of Fall Semester were evaluated in the second quarter report and Spring Semester 2012 were conducted during the third quarter. The evaluations of Summer Quarter were conducted in Fall 2012. Surveys, evaluations, phone interviews, and focus groups were used to provide formative feedback on courses, resources, support services, and the overall program. The results were analyzed, and results are included in this report. Recommendations will be implemented as indicated. The individual semester qualitative reports were included in the quarterly reports. The individual results have been combined for this annual report. This was not difficult since the students seem to have much of the same comments from semester to semester. Overall, the students are extremely pleased with the program and say without the flexibility of the program, they would not be able enroll in an nursing program with the rigid nature of these programs.

Focus Groups

The focus groups meetings were conducted each semester in Columbus in the classroom and lab facilities. These meetings covered the previous semester's courses.

January 31, 2012	Traditional Cohort II	Classroom at 1450 54th Street; Columbus, GA
February 2, 2012, 2:15 p.m.	Traditional Cohort I	On base at Martin Army Hospital Simulation Lab
February 2, 2012, 4:30 p.m.	Bridge Cohort II	Classroom at 1450 54th Street; Columbus, GA
June 5, 2012	Traditional Cohort II	Classroom at 1450 54th Street; Columbus, GA
June 7, 2012, 3:00 p.m.	Bridge Cohort II	Classroom at 1450 54th Street; Columbus, GA
June 7, 2012, 5:00 p.m.	Traditional Cohort I	Classroom at 1450 54th Street; Columbus, GA
September 11, 2012 3:30 p.m.	Traditional Cohort II	Classroom at 1450 54th Street; Columbus, GA
September 20, 2012 4:15 p.m	Bridge Cohort II	Classroom at 1450 54th Street; Columbus, GA

Annual Summary

Focus Groups

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In the focus groups sessions, students were asked their opinions on the benefits of the program, how they thought the program could be improved, how easy it is to communicate with their instructors, any technical difficulties and how they were handled, the mentoring program, and whether they felt connected to the course and their instructors. Earlier in the year, students said they wanted more communication with their instructors. This has greatly improved, and now they overwhelmingly praise their instructors in all of the cohorts. Students said that they went above and beyond the call of duty and that they were always accessible by cell phone calls, texting, and email. They are very thankful to be a part of the program, stating that this program is the only way they could have worked toward their goal of becoming registered nurses. They all agreed that the flexibility of the program and the ability to work online 24/7 around their schedule was a major strength of the program and critical to their ability to complete a RN program. Several reported that they like the ability to review the material multiple times through Wimba. Most students requested video lectures recorded from Darton's face-to-face classes. Once we returned to campus, this was arranged for each Fort Benning course, and these are being recorded, converted to a video streaming file and placed in their courses each week. Even though much of the content is redundant, the students are reporting great satisfaction with these video lectures. Students also asked that the tests be created by their lecturer; however, the Georgia Board of Nursing requires that the test be the same for all sections of a course in a semester (this was also mentioned in the phone interviews). Some expressed dissatisfaction with student services on the Darton campus in not being able to get phone calls through. Mandatory state budget cuts have made it very difficult to add needed personnel. It was emphasized that they were to call the Grant Office to handle these problems. Technical problems have decreased over time; very few problems were reported, and those were resolved. (See the Focus Group Summary Yearly Report attachment for further details.)

Telephone Interviews

The students are telephoned each semester so that they have an opportunity to discuss the previous semester courses and to provide them with the opportunity to let us know what is satisfactory, and what needs improvement. All of the cohorts' responses are very much alike.
Overall, the students are very pleased with the program. They did have some complaints. They are unhappy with many of the fees that all students are charged. Although we sympathize with students, we have been unsuccessful in getting any of them waived in the current state budget crunch. As in the focus group meetings, complaints that were voiced in previous semesters about more face-to-face time with their instructors have ceased. Much effort has gone into making that happen. When the Customized Nursing program was planned, prospective student input was that online was preferred, but experience has taught them and us that some face-to-face is necessary. They do not want to change entirely to a face-to-face format; hybrid is preferred and necessary to their lives. As a result of their comments, more online lectures are being used, and more Wimba sessions employed. Most say that there is no way they could participate in an entirely face-to-face environment because of the stresses of military life. Now the students are overwhelmingly complimentary of their instructors, stating that they go above and beyond what is expected. They are very good to work around the students' schedules. This semester only one student complained about not being able to get in touch with the instructor; we are very puzzled by this one comment. The students in general think that they are not getting the same access to material as the main campus students. We are making every effort to investigate this and to rectify the situation if necessary. They appreciate and enjoy the videos of live lectures in Albany, want more of them, and want them within 24

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hours of the lecture. Most, but not all of the students, strongly dislike the discussion threads. They say that they are a waste of valuable time that could be spent learning the material through reading or other study methods. Investigation revealed that every course offered by Darton State College must have a Writing Across the Curriculum assignment as a mandatory component. For each course taught, including online courses, a writing assignment must be included in the syllabus. Discussion Threads are an acceptable means of meeting this requirement. Students are asked what obstacles they face in the program. The answers have been consistent across the semesters: families, jobs, and, in some cases, a spouse who has been deployed. Many say that they have no obstacles because the program is so flexible. Students continue to complain about Darton campus personnel not answering the phone and not returning calls. This has been ongoing for several semesters. When we investigated, we were told by the offices that all phone calls are returned by the end of the day. One problem seems to be that the students are not always available when the Darton employee returns the call. The College is making every effort to rectify the situation; however, severe budget cuts have made it very difficult to add needed personnel. After all the state budget cuts already implemented, the College currently is trying to find ways to implement yet another mandatory state cut to funding. Until the economy improves, this situation is unlikely to improve. The students have been told repeatedly to call the Grant Office because we will walk over to the administrative office in person to try to solve the problem. The students are happy with the Grants Department. All students either rated it as a 5 (5 is the best score) or Not Applicable if they had no reason to ask for Grants Department help.

Students were also asked for overall comments about the Customized Nursing program. They are very enthusiastic about the program. (See Focus Group Summary Yearly Report attachment for details.)

(See the Summary of Telephone Interviews Yearly Report attachment for details.)
Summer Semester Telephone reviews are also attached.

Online Surveys

Online surveys were also conducted. The results support the outcomes of the focus groups and telephone interviews. Students reported significant satisfaction with their courses and the resources. They are remarkably happy with their instructors; survey results indicate that communication with them has improved over time and is now is excellent. This indicates to us that the instructors are trying very hard to meet student needs.

The results of all evaluations are shared with all the appropriate stakeholders and Darton College administrative offices as indicated. No student names or identifying numbers will be included in any summary or report.

The online surveys of Summer semesters courses are attached.

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Quantitative Data Analysis

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- **Research: Summer 2011, Fall 2011, and Spring 2012**

  Because of the start date difference the research was conducted for Fall 2011, Spring 2012 and Summer 2012

The first set of analyses looked at group comparison between each of the Fort Benning programs and the respective comparison program. Independent t-tests and Levene's Test for Equality of Variances were used to assess differences between the Fort Benning programs and the Darton College programs in terms of graduating GPA as well as individual semester GPAs (Hypotheses I through IV). Beyond this, we used chi-square tests to compare the Fort Benning graduates to the Darton College graduates in regard to passing the NCLEX exam (Hypotheses VIII and IX). In addition retention rates, graduation rates and persistence rates of the Fort Benning cohorts were compared using chi-square tests to the Darton College cohorts (Hypotheses X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, and XV).

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Customized Nursing Programs for the Fort Benning Community
Report September 2012
Regine Haardörfer, Ph.D.

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1. The first bridge cohort – Graduated Fall 2011

The first bridge cohort started with 13 Fort Benning students. The students were almost equally male (53.8%) and female (46.2%). Of the 12 students who provided race, 7 were African American and 5 where Caucasian. All students but one were part-time students. In the third semester, 2 students left the cohort. The remaining 11 completed all four semesters of the program (Table 1.1)

Overall, there were a higher percentage of men and African Americans enrolled in the Fort Benning cohort than in the Albany cohort. The Fort Benning cohort was, on average, about 1.5 years older than the Albany cohort. Both cohorts had equally high percentages of part-time students. (Table 1.1)

Despite these differences, the Fort Benning cohort was not statistically significantly different on key demographics (gender, race, and age) from the Albany cohort.

Table 1.1. Comparing descriptives of the first Fort Benning Bridge Cohort students with the Albany cohort in the first semester

	N	%	N	%	p-value
Gender (N = 13)					
Female	6	46.2%	26	63.4%	
Male	7	53.8%	14	34.1%	.270
Race (N = 12)					
Caucasian	5	41.7%	26	65.0%	
African American	7	58.3%	13	32.5%	
Asian	0	-	1	2.5%	.254
Full-time/part-time student					
Full-time	1	7.7%	1	2.4%%	
Part-time	12	92.3%	40	97.6%	.382
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	
Age at program start	38.46	7.11	36.98	8.10	.556

Table 1.2 shows that the Fort Benning cohort had a slightly higher graduating GPA that was not statistically significantly higher than the graduating GPA of the Albany cohort (Hypothesis II). Furthermore, there was not statistically significantly difference between individual semester GPAs between the cohorts (Hypothesis IV). The means were sometimes higher in the Fort Benning group (semesters 1 and 3) and sometimes higher in the Albany group (semesters 2 and 4). The same was true for the GPA from only the nursing courses.

There was no statistically significant difference in graduation rates from the Fort Benning Bridge cohort with 76.9% of the students graduating and the Albany cohort (Hypothesis XV). There was also not difference in retention rates with 84.6% of the students enrolled for at least one year (Hypothesis XIV).

All of the Fort Benning students that graduated from the program passed the NCLEX exam compared to 82.1% from of the Albany students. The difference was not statistically significant due to the small sample size.

Table 1.2. Comparing the Fort Benning and the Albany cohorts on key success indicators

	Fort Benning		Albany		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p-value
Graduating GPA	3.228	0.332	3.166	0.382	.641
Semester GPAs					
1. Semester	3.121	0.575	3.057	0.405	.657
2. Semester	2.667	0.604	2.905	0.514	.172
3. Semester	3.000	0.636	3.061	0.452	.699
4. Semester	3.130	0.837	3.050	0.613	.724
GPA from Nursing courses per semester					
1. Semester	3.139	0.634	2.976	0.371	.394
2. Semester	2.585	0.518	2.858	0.541	.114
3. Semester	2.920	0.594	3.000	0.501	.661
4. Semester	3.091	0.831	3.077	0.580	.949
Retention rates	N	%	N	%	
More than one year	11	84.6%	39	95.1%	
Less than one year	2	15.4%	2	4.9%	.208
Graduation rates					
Yes	10	76.9%	38	92.7%	
No	3	23.1%	3	7.3%	.115
NCLEX Exam rates – first attempt					
Yes	7	70.0%	32	82.1%	
No	3	30.0%	7	17.9%	.399

2. The second Bridge Cohort – started Fall 2011

The second bridge cohort started in the fall of 2011 with 12 students. The large majority was female (75%) and African American (75%). Most students were enrolled part time (83.3%) and the average age was almost 38 years (Table 2.1).

The racial composition of the Fort Benning cohort is statistically significantly different than that of the Albany cohort (Table 2.1) with a higher percentage of African Americans. The two cohorts are not significantly different in terms of gender, age, and part-time/full-time student status.

Table 2.1. Comparing descriptives of the first Fort Benning Bridge Cohort students with the Albany cohort in the first semester

	Fort Benning		Albany		
	N	%	N	%	p-value
Gender					
Female	9	75.0%	35	71.4%	
Male	3	25.0%	14	28.6%	.805

Race					
Caucasian	3	25.0%	30	68.2%	
African American	9	75.0%	14	31.8%	.007**
Full-time/part-time student					
Full-time	2	16.7%	7	14.3%	
Part-time	10	83.3%	42	85.7%	.835
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Age at program start	37.83	6.90	36.59	8.57	.643

Note: ** $p < .01$.

Table 2.2 shows the mean semester GPAs for both cohorts as well as the GPA from the nursing courses of the first semester. In both cases, the Fort Benning students performed statistically significantly better than the Albany students. Their average first semester GPA was higher by 0.386 and their average GPA from the nursing courses was higher by more than 0.5. Those differences in semester GPA (which was identical to the GPA from nursing courses) were not observed in the second and third semester.

Table 2.2. Comparing the Fort Benning and the Albany cohorts on key success indicators

	Fort Benning		Albany		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p-value
Semester GPAs					
1. Semester	3.451	0.406	3.065	0.511	.018*
2. Semester	2.682	0.760	2.786	0.551	.652
3. Semester	3.130	0.489	2.856	0.601	.153
GPA from Nursing courses per semester					
1. Semester	3.467	0.365	2.959	0.658	.013*
2. Semester	2.682	0.760	2.786	0.551	.652
3. Semester	3.130	0.489	2.856	0.601	.153

Note: * $p < .05$.

3. First Traditional Cohort – Started Spring 2011 graduated Summer 2012

The first traditional Fort Benning cohort started with 13 students. Most were female (84.6%) and African American (50%). All were enrolled as part-time students. The average age was almost 38 years.

The Fort Benning cohort had more men and more African Americans enrolled than the Albany cohort. The Fort Benning students were, on average, about 3 years older. However, the differences were not statistically significant (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Comparing descriptives of the first Fort Benning Bridge Cohort students with the Albany cohort in the first semester

	Fort Benning		Albany		
	N	%	N	%	p-value
Gender					
Female	11	84.6%	28	90.3%	
Male	2	15.4%	3	9.7%	.586
Race					
Caucasian	5	41.7%	20	69.0%	
African American	6	50.0%	9	31.0%	.117

American-Indian or Alaskan Native	1	8.3%	0	-	
Full-time/part-time student					
Full-time	0	-	1	3.2%	
Part-time	13	100%	30	96.8%	.512
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	
Age at program start	37.85	6.45	34.58	9.17	.189

Table 3.2 shows the mean semester GPAs and the mean GPAs per semester from the nursing courses. There were no statistically significant differences in the semester GPAs between the Fort Benning and the Albany students. The means were higher for the Fort Benning students in the first semester and lower in the subsequent semesters. The mean nursing GPAs show similar patterns. However, the Albany students had a significantly higher GPA in their nursing courses during the second semester.

More students in the Fort Benning cohort (84.6%) were retained for at least 4 semesters than in the Albany cohort (72.7%), although the difference was not statistically significant (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2. Comparing the traditional Fort Benning and the Albany cohorts on key success indicators

	Fort Benning		Albany		
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	**p-value**
Graduating GPA	2.950	0.322	2.899	0.438	.743
Semester GPAs					
1. Semester	2.935	0.629	2.893	0.472	.809
2. Semester	2.519	0.632	2.859	0.364	.091
3. Semester	2.708	0.889	2.924	0.379	.417
4. Semester	2.427	0.516	2.587	0.500	.413
5. Semester	2.818	0.751	2.826	0.388	.564
GPA from Nursing courses per semester					
1. Semester	2.910	0.618	2.838	0.617	.725
2. Semester	2.462	0.660	2.885	0.326	.045*
3. Semester	2.723	0.860	2.915	0.390	.456
4. Semester	2.427	0.516	2.587	0.500	.413
5. Semester	2.818	0.751	2.826	0.388	.564
Retention rates	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	
More than one year	11	84.6	24	72.7	
Less than one year	2	15.4	9	27.3	.395

4. Second Traditional Cohort – Started Spring 2012

The second traditional cohort started in the spring of 2012 with 14 students. Please note: With no parallel Albany cohort in spring 2012, this cohort will be compared the Albany cohort that started in spring of 2011. The all but one of the students are female (93%) and Caucasian (71.4%). All students were enrolled part time and the average age was almost 38 years (Table 4.1).

The two cohorts are not significantly different in regard to demographic composition.

Table 4.1. Comparing descriptives of the second traditional Fort Benning Bridge Cohort students with the first traditional Albany cohort

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	Fort Benning		Albany		
	N	%	N	%	p-value
Gender					
Female	13	92.9%	28	90.3%	
Male	1	7.1%	3	9.7%	..634
Race					
Caucasian	10	71.4%	20	69.0%	
African American	4	28.6%	9	31.0%	.581
Full-time/part-time student					
Full-time	0	0%	1	3.2%	
Part-time	14	100%	30	96.8%	.689
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Age at program start	30.57	4.64	34.58	9.17	0.58

Note: ** $p < .01$.

Table 4.2 shows the mean semester GPAs for both cohorts as well as the GPA from the nursing courses of the first and second semester. In both cases, the Fort Benning students equally well than the Albany students. Their average first semester GPA was slightly lower but in the second semester their semester GPA was somewhat higher. Their average GPA from the nursing courses was slightly lower in the first semester but somewhat higher in the second semester.

Table 4.2. Comparing the second traditional Fort Benning cohort and the first Albany traditional cohort on key success indicators

	Fort Benning		Albany		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p-value
Semester GPAs					
1. Semester	2.752	0.699	2.894	0.472	.430
2. Semester	2.818	0.751	2.696	0.470	.564
GPA from Nursing courses per semester					
1. Semester	2.752	0.699	2.838	0.617	.681
2. Semester	2.818	0.751	2.696	0.470	.564

Note: * $p < .05$.

**Group Differences
By Hypotheses**

I. Comparison of graduating GPAs of Traditional FB students and Traditional DC students
Null Hypothesis: Mean DC = Mean FB
Alternative Hypothesis: Mean DC < Mean FB

Graduating GPA of the Traditional Fort Benning Spring 2011 cohort was slightly higher (Mean = 2.950) than of the DC cohort (Mean = 2.899). The difference was not statistically significant, p > .05.

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II. Comparison of graduating GPAs of Fall 2010 cohort Accelerated FB students and Accelerated DC students.
Null Hypothesis: Mean DC = Mean FB
Alternative Hypothesis: Mean DC < Mean FB

Graduating GPA of the Bridge Fort Benning Fall 2010 cohort was slightly higher (Mean = 3.228) than of the DC cohort (Mean = 3.166). The difference was not statistically significant, p > .05.

III. Comparison of each of the individual semester GPAs of Traditional FB students and Traditional DC students.
Null Hypothesis: Mean DC = Mean FB
Alternative Hypothesis: Mean DC < Mean FB

1. *Traditional cohort: Semester GPAs for the Fort Benning students were at times slightly higher and at times slightly lower than those of DC students. None of the differences were large enough to be statistically significant.*
2. *Traditional cohort: Semester GPAs for the Fort Benning students were at times slightly higher and at times slightly lower than those of DC students. None of the differences were large enough to be statistically significant.*

IV. Comparison of each of the individual semester GPAs of Accelerated FB students and Accelerated DC students.
Null Hypothesis: Mean DC = Mean FB
Alternative Hypothesis: Mean DC < Mean FB

1. *Hybrid cohort: Semester GPAs for the Fort Benning students were at times slightly higher and at times slightly lower than those of DC students. None of the differences were large enough to be statistically significant.*
2. *Hybrid cohort: In the first semester, the GPAs for the Fort Benning students were significantly higher (p = .0180 than those of the DC students. In subsequent semesters, semester GPAs of the Fort Benning students were once slightly lower and once slightly higher than those of DC students, but those differences were not large enough to be statistically significant.*

V. Comparison of the GPAs of students taking advantage of mentoring (Group M) to students not taking advantage of mentoring (Group NM) in the Traditional FB program.
Null Hypothesis: Mean NM = Mean M
Alternative Hypothesis: Mean NM < Mean M

All students in the Traditional Fort Benning program took advantage of the mentoring. Hence, no differences can be observed.

VI. Comparison of the GPAs of students taking advantage of the mentoring (Group M) to students not taking advantage of the mentoring (Group NM) in the Accelerated FB program.
Null Hypothesis: Mean NM = Mean M
Alternative Hypothesis: Mean NM < Mean M

All students in the Accelerated Fort Benning program took advantage of the mentoring. Hence, no differences can be observed.

VII. The Accelerated DC program has been specifically designed for and taught to LPNs and Paramedics. For the Accelerated FB program, Darton College sought and received special approval from the GBON and the NLNAC to include the Army Medic 68W M6. An independent t-test will be employed to determine the relationship between the LPNs and Paramedics group (LPN&P) and the Army Medic 68W M6 group (AM) in terms of their individual semester GPAs.

Null Hypothesis: Mean LPN&P = Mean AM
Alternative Hypothesis: Mean LPN&P ≠ Mean AM

No Army Medic 68W M6 have entered the program so far, However, we have had many Medic 68Ws.

VIII. Comparison of the percentage of graduates passing the NCLEX exam from the Traditional FB program and the Traditional DC program.

Null Hypothesis: Percentage Passing DC = Percentage Passing FB14
Alternative Hypothesis: Percentage Passing DC < Percentage Passing FB

Of the students who graduated from the Traditional FB program in the cohort of Fall 2010 70% passed the NCLEX exam on the first attempt compared to 82.1% of DC students. The remaining 30% passed on the second attempt. Due to the small cohort size, the difference is not statistically significant.

IX. Comparison of the percentage of graduates passing the NCLEX exam from the Accelerated FB program and the Accelerated DC program

Null Hypothesis: Percentage Passing DC = Percentage Passing FB
Alternative Hypothesis: Percentage Passing DC < Percentage Passing FB

The first Accelerated FB students just graduated and are still in the process of taking the NCLEX exam. We will report on this at a later time when the students have attempted to take the exam.

X. Comparison of the persistence rates from the Traditional FB program and the Traditional DC program.

Null Hypothesis: Percentage Persisting DC = Percentage Persisting FB
Alternative Hypothesis: Percentage Persisting DC < Percentage Persisting FB

Not enough time has passed to assess persistence rates from the first or second Traditional FB program.

XI. Comparison of the persistence rates from the Accelerated FB program and the Accelerated DC program.

Null Hypothesis: Percentage Persisting DC = Percentage Persisting FB
Alternative Hypothesis: Percentage Persisting DC < Percentage Persisting FB

Not enough time has passed to assess persistence rates from the first or second Accelerated FB program.

XII. Comparison of the retention rates from the Traditional FB program and the Traditional DC program.

Null Hypothesis: Percentage Retained DC = Percentage Retained FB
Alternative Hypothesis: Percentage Retained DC < Percentage Retained FB

The retention rate in the first Traditional FB cohort was higher (84.6%) than in the Traditional DC cohort (72.7%). The difference was not statistically significant due to small cohort size.

XIV. Comparison of the retention rates from the Accelerated FB program and the Accelerated DC program
Null Hypothesis: Percentage Retained DC = Percentage Retained FB
Alternative Hypothesis: Percentage Retained DC < Percentage Retained FB

The retention rate in the first Accelerated FB cohort were lower (84.6%) than in the Accelerated DC cohort (95.1%) but the difference was not statistically significant.

XII. Comparison of the graduation rates from the Traditional FB program and the Traditional DC program.
Null Hypothesis: Percentage Graduated DC = Percentage Graduated FB
Alternative Hypothesis: Percentage Graduated DC < Percentage Graduated FB

There are no data yet on the graduation rate of the first or second Accelerated FB cohort.

XV. Comparison of the graduation rates from the Accelerated FB program and the Accelerated DC program
Null Hypothesis: Percentage Graduated DC = Percentage Graduated FB
Alternative Hypothesis: Percentage Graduated DC < Percentage Graduated FB

The graduation rate in the first Traditional FB cohort was higher (84.6%) than in the Traditional DC cohort (72.7%). The difference was not statistically significant due to small cohort size

Sections of the Normal Fourth Quarterly Report Included in this Annual Report

Customized Nursing Programs Timelines and Milestones September 13 2012- December 12 2012			
Healthcare Professional Bridge to RN for LPNs, Paramedics and Army Medic 68W And Traditional Cohorts			
Cohort	**Start Date**	**Program**	**Courses Fall Semester 2012 (August 15 – December 11)**
Traditional I Graduated	January 2011	Traditional Nursing Program	Graduated at end of Summer Semester
Traditional II	January 2012	Traditional Nursing Program	Adult Health II NURS 1112

			Psychiatric Nursing NURS 2113
Bridge II (4th of 4 semesters)	October 2011	Healthcare Professional Bridge	Adult Health III NURS 2115
Bridge III (1st of 4 semesters)	October 9, 2012	Healthcare Professional Bridge Will graduate Fall 2012	Fundamentals NURS 1301 Psych. Nursing NURS 2313

Timeline, Objectives, and Milestones September 14- December 13, 2012	
Development of Courses and Resources	
Dates	Activities
September 14 2012- December 13 2012	Enhancement and modifications of the following courses will be completed by the Resource Advisory Committee members. Each semester the courses for the next semester will be converted to the new course design and shell. The will also be modified based on student and faculty input.
Netbook/Laptop Courses Development	
Dates	Activities
September 14 2012 - September 13, 2013	The following educational core courses will be developed for deliver on netbooks and Laptops with very limited internet access. This development is not scheduled to be completed until September 14, 2013. ENGL 1102; COMM 1101, PSYC 2115 and PHED 1161
Mentoring Resources Development	
Dates	Activities
March 15, 2012 – June 15, 2013	Development of the mentoring resources will be continued for and all resources are scheduled to be completed by September 15, 2012. The development is already underway but additional work needs to be done. The Enhancement, supplementing, and improvement will be on going as we find additional resources and with the feedback from the students.

Personnel

Grant Coordinator

A new full time Grant Coordinator was hired on February 6 with institutional funds to aid in grant administration and research. With a public policy master's degree, he had wide-ranging experience as a grant manager, writer, editor, and research coordinator in the field of public health. He assisted in all aspects of grants management. Unfortunately, he resigned July 13 to pursue another opportunity. He was replaced by Shalonda Heard who first came to us August 8 as a part time Grant Assistant and then became full time Grant Coordinator September 1. She has a Bachelor of Science in Technical, Trade, & Industrial Education and a Master's degree in Adult & Career Education. She has more than ten years of experience in administration and program/project coordination. She also has experience in coordinating grant funded activities and providing educational services to grant funded programs as well as prior teaching experience both in post-secondary education and continuing education settings with diverse,

non-traditional, first generation, and adult learner student populations. She is being very effective in coordinating activities of the Customized Nursing program.

Multimedia Specialist/Web Designer
Much to our regret, Tonya Wright, Multimedia Specialist/Web Designer, resigned effective March 1 in preparation for accompanying her husband to his new job. She has continued to work on the Fort Benning project as a consultant. Bill Wally was hired May 21 to fill this position. He is a former Darton employee whom we were very happy to re-hire. At Darton he had valuable experience as a multimedia specialist/network coordinator/WebCT specialist. He has extensive experience in many areas of computing and is making valuable contributions to the project. Since Meredith Fogle is on maternity leave Tonya Wright continues to work via contract.

Multimedia Specialist
Meredith Fogle continues as our Multimedia Specialist.

Nursing Faculty
We are continuing the search to identify a suitable candidate for an additional full-time nursing faculty member for the Fort Benning program. We advertised in regional newspapers, through online services, and on the Darton website. We have had very few applicants, and as of yet no one has met the qualifications we targeted. One of this nurse faculty's primary responsibilities is to mentor the Fort Benning Students. Since this position is still vacant, the Fort Benning faculty will continue to mentor the students in addition to the Nursing faculty mentor, Verna Inanadan. Verna has been a full time mentor for Darton for several years and she has spent time instructing the Fort Benning faculty on effective mentoring techniques. Verna also continues to travel to Fort Benning to hold mentoring sessions with the students as well as mentoring through technology.

Nurse Grant Consultant
Also in February, we hired a Nurse Grant Consultant, Roberta Gates, to work exclusively on the Fort Benning project. We considered other candidates, but she was the best qualified by far. She is the person we wanted to hire much earlier in the program because she has vast knowledge and experience in many areas of nursing, but she was unavailable due to the serious illness and death of a family member. With that issue behind her, she is free to work with us, and is proving to be a real asset; it was worth the wait. She is a master's degree registered nurse with extensive experience in teaching nursing courses in several different academic environments in both online and classroom formats. Having worked as a consultant for nursing curriculum revision, she is very effective in ensuring that all Fort Benning nursing curriculum meets accreditation standards. She is assisting in the enhancement of resources and course materials, and works directly with the multimedia and web development team. She has been added to the Course and Resource Advisory Committee (RAC), consisting of Cindy Lee until June then Birdie Gates filled that position.(Nursing Coordinator for Fort Benning Programs/nursing faculty/course developer/advisor), Carolyn Gay, (technology specialist/course developer/project manager/evaluation technologist), and the multimedia technology developer. The entire RAC team is working with the students suggestions and input from the teaching faculty.

Administrative Assistant
Our Administrative Assistant, Mary Ann Gates resigned effective August 6, 2012 for a hard money position in another department on campus. Lindsey Watson was hired to replace her August 22, 2012. She has a Bachelor of Business Administration and ten years of experience

in business administration, operations, marketing, and complex civil law administrator. She has excellent computer and communication skills, as well as a good work ethic, and is an excellent member of our team.

Conclusion

The Customized Nursing Programs are going well. The students as a whole are very pleased and appreciate the opportunity to be enrolled in a flexible program. Most say without the customization they would not be able to complete a nursing program. The formative evaluations have served the program well and provide opportunities for continual improvement of the program and courses. The courses and resources are of high quality and very effective. The statistical analysis rarely shows any statistical differences from the Fort Benning cohorts and the established Darton College cohorts. The students are doing at least as well as the Darton students on the main campus. We have completed the statement of work for the first year as scheduled. There are no major problems or do not we see any need to make major modifications at the time.